

**PREPARED STATEMENT OF CLYDE J. HART, JR.,
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COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION**

Mr. Chairman, Senator Hollings, I want to begin by thanking you for your efforts, as well as those of the Committee Members, in scheduling this hearing. It is indeed an honor to be sitting on this side of the table talking with you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Hollings, and the other members of the Commerce Committee, after serving on the Committee staff. Before I go any further, I would like to say that my years on the Committee staff have been a highlight of my career and I will forever consider it an honor to have served as a member of the Committee staff.

Likewise, I consider it an honor and a privilege to have been nominated for the position of Maritime Administrator at the Department of Transportation by President Clinton. I deeply appreciate the confidence and trust that Secretary Slater has placed in me by recommending me for this position. If confirmed, I welcome the opportunity to serve him, and the nation, as a part of this Administration.

During his confirmation hearing before this Committee, Secretary Slater talked about his "expansive vision of what transportation means to our society and to our people." He talked about how transportation has pulled us together as a nation, sustained our dreams and given us the freedom to enjoy the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I share Secretary Slater's vision of transportation and, if confirmed, will work with him in pressing this vision forward.

For the Maritime Administration this vision of the Nation's transportation system must encompass two basic goals. First, making our maritime transportation system the most modern, competitive, and efficient in the world. Second, providing critical sea-lift capability to support our national security needs.

I am very excited by the opportunities and challenges that await me should I be confirmed as Maritime Administrator. First, I believe that there is no more important maritime issue than the continued existence and well being of a United States flag fleet. As the former Maritime Administrator, Admiral Herberger has stated, the United States is a sea power and we must remain so. But at the beginning of this year, the number of privately owned commercial ships in the U.S.-flag fleet was down to approximately 260 ships. That total includes 119 ships in domestic (Jones Act) trade and 36 other ships engaged exclusively in U.S. government work. Thus, only 104 U.S.-flag ships are operating in international trade. We, as a Nation must find ways to increase the U.S.-flag fleet. What we don't own as a Nation, we cannot be said to control.

Second, we must ensure that the Nation's ports are able to compete in the

global economy. Every day, millions of tons of cargo move through American ports, most of which is carried on ships. A primary issue for many of our ports, of course, is the replacement of the Harbor Maintenance Tax used for port dredging. It is critical that we find an equitable method to fund dredging projects as soon as possible. I look forward to joining the interagency group the Administration has convened to explore this problem and working toward a solution.

Third, there is the issue of the increasing intermodal nature of our transportation system. Goods that come to United States ports will do the Nation's citizens little good if those goods cannot move inland either by rail, motor or water transportation. Similarly, the movement of our citizens requires, I believe, that we think intermodally as well. The use of ferries to relieve the pressure on our highway and rail systems is one such idea. The idea of using the coastal sea routes to move cargo along the I-95 corridor is another. I hope to have a part in this debate and in crafting sensible solutions to these problems.

In closing I'd like to give thanks to my family and friends without whose support and encouragement, I am sure I would not be before you today. In particular I would like to acknowledge my late parents, Audrey and Clyde, Sr. and my brother, Calvin, who, in his position as a Detective with the Jersey City Police Department and in his many community activities in the city in which we were so lovingly raised demonstrates every day that one person can make a positive difference in the lives of others. Special thanks go to United States District Court Judge Aubrey E. Robinson, Jr., whose life and career continue to be an inspiration to me and to all who had the honor of clerking for him.

I'd like to take a moment to thank you, Senator Hollings, for the opportunity you gave me by taking me on as a member of the Committee staff, an unparalleled opportunity both to serve and to learn. You have always challenged me to think through issues to ensure that all sides are understood, and to make decisions based on what is right and fair regardless of the consequences. In addition, your personal and professional integrity is an inspiration to all who have had the good fortune to work for you.

I also want to thank the rest of the Committee Members for all the kindness and respect that you have shown me over the years. In particular, I want to thank Senator Inouye and Senator Breaux for their encouragement and support during my time here. I consider that this is one of the best and most respected Committees in Congress, with the finest staff. I always will proudly consider myself a member of the Senate Commerce Committee family.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would be happy to answer any questions that

you and the other members of the Committee might have.